

## Introduction: Pre-Modern Japan Through the Prism of Patronage

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Though not unfamiliar to scholarship on pre-modern Japan, the concept of patronage has been treated unevenly and unsystematically. The term is most commonly found in studies by art historians, but even they have frequently dealt with it indirectly or tangentially. The same is true of the study of the history of religion, despite the fact that patronage was fundamental to the establishment and growth of most schools and sects. Works like Martin Collcutt's *Five Mountains*, with its detailed discussion of Hōjō and imperial patronage of Zen, are rare.<sup>1</sup> Other scholarly approaches are more common. Perhaps this is merely a reflection of a field of study — pre-modern Japan — that is not highly developed outside of Japan. An additional factor may be that patronage is a word of Western origins and thus potentially inappropriate as an interpretive idea in the Japanese context. It is true that no corresponding term exists in Chinese or Japanese, whether as an artistic concept or a more general one. For example, in classical Chinese one could write of a “connoisseur” or “collector” of the arts, but no word denoted the support of art and artists by individuals of wealth and influence. In modern Japan, the concepts of patron and patronage have been adopted along with the English words — thus one sees *patoron* パトロソ and *patoroneeji* パトロネージ.<sup>2</sup> One might argue

that this lack of corresponding words and concepts is good reason to avoid using the Western terms in our discussions of pre-modern East Asian art and society. And yet practices of patronage are clearly not culture specific. Where art is found, there is patronage, even if the extent and types and meanings of that patronage differ from place to place and culture to culture. The same is undoubtedly true of religion. In the paragraphs that follow I briefly summarize the approach to early modern patronage in Western scholarship and consider patronage's value as an interpretive concept for Japan, addressing specifically its artistic and political forms.

Scholars of early modern Europe have focused primarily on political and cultural patronage.<sup>3</sup> Political patronage was a system of personal ties and networks that advanced the interests of the system's participants: patrons and clients. A patron was an individual in a position to assist someone of lesser standing in his (or her) efforts to acquire an office, a title, increased social standing, or some other good. In return, the client offered the patron loyalty, perhaps material favors, and increased social prestige. Patrons generally enjoyed greater wealth, political power, and social influence than their clients, though in some cases a client held one of these in large measure but required a patron's assistance to move up in another. For example, because wealth and status did not always go hand-in-hand in early modern Europe, a wealthy client could offer financial support to a strapped patron in exchange for assistance in acquiring a coveted political title or religious position. As defined by Sharon Kettering, political patronage was “an unequal vertical alliance between superiors and inferiors or dependents based on an obligatory exchange.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Martin Collcutt, *Five Mountains: The Rin-zai Zen Monastic Institution in Medieval Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1981).

<sup>2</sup> See Chu-Tsing Li, ed., *Artists and Patrons: Some Social and Economic Aspects of Chinese Painting* (Kansas City: Kress Foundation Department of Art History, University of Kansas, 1989), p. 1; and Steven Carter, *Literary Patronage in Late Medieval Japan* (Ann Arbor:

Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1993), pp. 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> “Patronage in Early Modern France,” in Sharon Kettering, *Patronage in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 843-844.

<sup>4</sup> “Introduction,” in Kettering, p. viii.

In contrast to political patronage, cultural or artistic patronage was narrow in scope. It concerned not individuals' political and social ambitions (at least not outwardly), but the creation of art. Through the assistance of patrons, who were usually wealthy and socially influential, artists were able to produce works that otherwise would have gone unformed, uncreated. Financial support, whether as stipends or commissioned art work, was the common form of artistic patronage.<sup>5</sup> As art historians have discovered, studies of patronage can provide answers to questions such as, "For whom was art produced?"; "Through what means was it produced?"; "For what purposes was it produced?" and "How were artists paid for their work?" In some cases the answers are hard to come by. James Cahill, for example, admitted at a 1980 workshop on patronage in Chinese painting that this was a topic that had received little attention, and none of the workshop participants "could claim more than a fragmentary knowledge of the circumstances of patronage in Chinese painting." Yet he noted, more sanguinely, that "collectively we knew a great deal more than we had thought."<sup>6</sup> For those of us interested in the social meanings and constructions of art, an effort to understand patronage can offer important insights that should not be ignored.

One evidence of how much work remains to be done in Japanese art history (particularly outside of Japan) is seen in the still rather rudimentary discussion of patronage practices surrounding the *dōbōshū* ("cultural attendants") and other lower class artists of the late medieval era. Paul Varley's article — now nearly thirty years old — about the shogunal patronage of Ashikaga Yoshimitsu set a precedent that has been followed only infrequently.<sup>7</sup> Though important work has

been done on specific arts and artists, encompassing *noh*, linked verse, painting, and tea, sustained discussion of patronage has been limited; many scholars mention its conspicuousness, but few pursue its meanings in depth. An important exception is the set of essays, *Literary Patronage in Late Medieval Japan*, edited by Steven Carter and published in 1993.<sup>8</sup> This volume illuminates some of the significant literary and social ties between the period's warriors, courtiers, clerics, and commoners. Much more, however, remains to be done.

A relatively recent article in Japanese by Tanaka Yūko, titled "Edo bunka no patoroneeji," suggests that the topic of artistic patronage is likewise understudied in Japan; yet the article shows at the same time the promise that follows sustained analysis.<sup>9</sup> Since Tanaka's focus is *geinō* (a slippery term at best, sometimes rendered as the "performing arts," and including not just *noh*, kabuki, tea, and ikebana, but at times painting and calligraphy), we might expect her work to differ somewhat from the papers here. The extent of the differences are in fact profound, evidence I believe of the lack of agreement on fundamental developments in Tokugawa culture, particularly but by no means exclusively as it concerns patronage. For example, Tanaka asserts, 1) that by the Edo period, Kyoto court culture and patronage had ceased to exert influence and, 2) that the financial role of patronage in Edo culture was of minor importance, assertions that do not sit well with me and that clearly are at odds with other scholarship.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, Tanaka makes a number of points about patronage that are insightful and worth serious consideration. For example, she argues that patronage in the late medieval and early modern eras was linked by the common

<sup>5</sup> Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters: A Study in the Relations Between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), pp. 6-23.

<sup>6</sup> See Cahill's comments in Chu-Tsing Li, ed., p. 161.

<sup>7</sup> H. Paul Varley, "Ashikaga Yoshimitsu and the World of Kitayama: Social Change and Shogunal Patronage in the Early Muromachi

Era," in *Japan in the Muromachi Age*, edited by John W. Hall and Toyoda Takeshi (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1977), pp. 183-204.

<sup>8</sup> Cited in note 2.

<sup>9</sup> In Kumakura Isao, ed., *Dentō geinō no kenkyū, Nihon no kinsei* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1993), vol. 11, pp. 143-176.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

practice of including both patron and client as artists. As is well known, the “cultural attendants” to the Ashikaga Shoguns were in no sense independent artists. Rather than receive from their patrons stipends or payments that allowed them to produce art as they desired or as they were commissioned, the *dōbōshū* worked alongside their patrons. Their duties were broad, ranging from the dignified (serving as “officials” and “experts” at cultural gatherings) to the menial (cleaning and running errands), and the artistic products of their work are rightly considered to be jointly owned by the patrons who worked alongside them. In other words, the patrons were participants in the arts, creators of them and not merely interested bystanders. The crucial factor was not so much patronage as it was the bringing together of like-minded men of culture. Tanaka sees in the Edo period a closely related practice, that of artistic collaboration, a prime example being the work of Hon’ami Kōetsu and Tawaraya Sōtatsu. This practice was common among and between merchants and warriors, though rarely was the social gap between collaborators as large as it had been in the fifteenth century.<sup>11</sup>

Two other intriguing ideas that Tanaka presents, both linked to the importance of collaboration, are the primacy of “place” in the production of Japanese art and culture, and the social concept of *ren* 連 or the “culturally connected group.” Both of these must be considered, Tanaka argues, when examining Tokugawa-era art and patronage. Place refers to the location at which the artistic act takes place and is reflected in arts such as tea, flower arranging, and linked verse, as well as in artistic activities that took place, for example, in the pleasure quarters. As for *ren* (which Tanaka fails to define effectively),

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 143-152. In pairing Kōetsu and Sōtatsu in this manner, however, Tanaka minimizes the differences in social status that separated the two men — differences that readily led to patronage relationships; for more on this, see Lee Bruschke-Johnson, *Dismissed as Elegant Fossils: Kōnoe Nobutada and the Role of Aristocrats in Early Modern Japan* (Amsterdam: Hotei Publishing, 2004), pp. 54-55.

the author maintains that it was an idea that was more inclusive than the “group” or the “individual,” and that, as an early modern phenomenon, was the property of townspeople rather than courtiers or warriors.<sup>12</sup>

Despite these insights, Tanaka’s portrayal of Tokugawa-period art provides limited space for the workings of patronage. By focusing on uniquely Japanese ways of producing art, Tanaka suggests that artistic patronage was an uncharacteristic phenomenon. But at least she considers the subject, something that many others have failed to do. According to Patricia Graham, Edo-period patronage studies are rare because of long-standing historiographic trends and biases, summed up as “the shift to emphasis on art by and for commoners, and the fact that scholars tend to study these arts according to media, the stylistic lineages of artists, and the development of the oeuvres of individual artists.”<sup>13</sup> This is a

<sup>12</sup> Tanaka, “Edo bunka,” pp. 152 ff.

<sup>13</sup> Personal correspondence from Patricia Graham. The dearth of scholarship on early modern patronage is apparent in Graham’s “Early Modern Japanese Art History: An Overview of the State of the Field” and “Early Modern Japanese Art History: A Bibliography of Publications, Primarily in English,” in *Early Modern Japan: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 10:2 (Fall 2002), pp. 2-21, 78-104. Among the handful of publications whose focus is patronage are the following: Karen Gerhart, “Kano Tan’yū and Hōrin Jōshō: Patronage and Artistic Practice,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 55:4 (Winter 2000), pp. 483-508; Janice Katz, “Art Collecting and Patronage in Seventeenth Century Japan: The Maeda Daimyo,” Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2002; Elizabeth Lillehoj, “Tōfukumon’in: Empress, Patron, and Artist,” *Woman’s Art Journal* 17.1 (Spring/Summer 1996), pp. 28-34; William H. Samonides, “Patronizing Images: Kōdai-in and Toyotomi Hideyoshi at Kōdai-ji,” *Nichibunken Japan Review* 7 (1996), pp. 99-126; Yoko Woodson, “Traveling Bunjin Painters and their Patrons: Economic Lifestyle and Art of Rai Sanyo and Tanomura Chikuden,” Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1983.

compelling argument. Why it is, however, that these historiographic trends have precluded the study of patronage is unclear, especially when Tokugawa commoners must have been as much in need of patronage, both economic and social, as individuals of earlier eras. At any rate, breaking free from the constraints of this historiographic tradition should naturally lead to new avenues of study and analysis, such as patronage, that have routinely been ignored.

So what about the study of political patronage in pre-modern Japan? Do works on the topic exist? I am unaware of any, at least of any that address political patronage directly and discuss the topic in those terms. Yet much suggests that such an approach could bear fruitful results. I offer two examples below.

One example is the *kerai* system. Though *kerai* became a term in Tokugawa times that referred simply to the retainer of a military lord, in earlier centuries it was unrelated to warriors. In the Heian era *kerai* were highly educated and talented associates of great nobles. In return for protection and assistance, *kerai* provided information and instruction about government procedures, performing arts, and political and cultural precedents. *Kerai* were needed not because their superiors were ignorant or incapable but because the Heian elite created a world which highly esteemed the knowledge of precedents — political, social, religious, and cultural. Unable to know all they needed to know, great nobles engaged as advisors certain of their inferiors who were deeply learned in a particular field of study or art. The advisors were known as *kerai*, meaning someone who “shows respect to the family, or house.” In return for the *kerai*’s services, noble houses saw to it that their *kerai*’s needs and wants were met, as appropriate to their stations. The position of *kerai* tended to be passed on hereditarily, not out of legal obligations or promises but by custom. Either party to the agreement could end the relationship if he so desired and as long as there remained no obligations to fill.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See *kerai* entry in *Kokushi daijiten*, (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1979-97), vol. 5, p. 124; Ise Sadatake, *Teijō zakki*, in *Tōyō bunko* 1,

In later centuries the role of *kerai* as advisors on ritual and precedent lost significance, but the system continued to be maintained. The reason was that personal connections did so much to shape court politics and privilege. To the great noble families, *kerai* were a symbol of their influence and prestige; they also filled useful functions as attendants and assistants. To *kerai*, the great noble families were their entrance into grand court affairs and, more practically, a source of favors, rank advancement, and indirect income. We gain some insight into the *kerai* system, and the complexities of hierarchy and status issues in late medieval Japan, through examining the Konoe family and one of their *kerai*, the Hino.<sup>15</sup>

In the mid-sixteenth century, Hino Harumitsu sought Konoe Sakihisa’s help in finding a child to adopt as heir, since Harumitsu had no son. As part of his request, Harumitsu stated that the Hino would become *kerai* to the Konoe in return for this favor. Sakihisa agreed, and Harumitsu, who was overjoyed, feasted Sakihisa and offered him the gift of a hawk. An heir was subsequently chosen. Thirty-five years later, at the turn of the seventeenth century, the place of the Hino as Konoe *kerai* became a source of contention. The origins of the dispute are unclear, but the result was that the Hino refused to “fill their *kerai* duties” to Konoe Nobutada in New Year’s ceremonies at court. This was a serious affront to Nobutada who, as officiator at one of the day’s ceremonies, occupied a central place in the proceedings. It also angered Emperor Go-Yōzei, whose efforts to revive court ceremony at the time included reactivating the role of *kerai* in

nos. 444-447 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1985): pp. 101-102, entries for *kaboku* and *kerai*; Hashimoto Masanobu, “Keichō shichinen ni okeru Konoeke to Tokugawa Ieyasu no fuwa,” *Shojō kenkyū* 7 (1985): 13-17 (jō); and *Shojō kenkyū* 9 (1990): 4-17 (ge) — regarding the definition of *kerai*, see vol. 9, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> Hashimoto Masanobu examines the *kerai* relations of the Konoe and Hino in detail in his article cited above; also see Lee Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy in Japan, 1467-1680: Resilience and Renewal* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), pp. 110-111.

ceremonies. When the matter came to a head early in the first month of 1602, Hino Terusuke and his son Sukekatsu fled the capital rather than participate in ceremonies they considered demeaning to them. The dispute was patched up only through the good offices of Tokugawa Ieyasu. Even so, Hino Terusuke never became fully reestablished at court. Three months after this incident, Terusuke traveled to Fushimi to offer thanks and gifts to Ieyasu and the following year resigned his court positions. From that point, his ties to the military lord became increasingly close; he frequently visited Sunpu and eventually received a grant of land from Ieyasu. In essence, Hino Terusuke became the client of Tokugawa Ieyasu, having shifted his allegiance from the court hierarchy to a military patron.

Had Hino Terusuke thus moved from a patronage system to a feudal one, which, as early modern French historians have argued, differed in important ways one from another?<sup>16</sup> On the one hand, Terusuke did receive land, a fief, from Ieyasu. On the other, there is no evidence (and it is highly unlikely) that Terusuke made any sort of oath of fealty to Ieyasu or even promised him particular services or favors — common characteristics of the feudal bond. Furthermore, nothing suggests that Terusuke would have been “limited to one master,” as required in a feudal relationship. Had Terusuke chosen to enter into another patronage relationship, perhaps with the next emperor, he could have done so. For that matter, it appears that the reconciliation between the Konoe and Hino that took place following the 1602 altercation once more established the Hino as *kerai* of the Konoe. Although Terusuke chose to distance himself from that relationship, he remained a Konoe *kerai*, as did his son, Sukekatsu, who continued as a full-fledged member of court.

Another courtier who found a patron in Tokugawa Ieyasu was Yamashina Tokitsune.<sup>17</sup> The two men became acquainted in the last decade of the sixteenth century. At that time, Tokitsune

was an exile from court, residing first in Settsu, Nakajima and then in the Horikawa region of Kyoto. In 1591, Tokitsune called on Ieyasu in the capital, where the two men exchanged pleasantries and Tokitsune offered gifts of a book and poetry. The men apparently got along very well and Tokitsune visited frequently in coming weeks and months. It is unlikely that Ieyasu and Tokitsune reached any formal understanding as to their patron-client relationship, but it was clearly in place within two weeks of their initial meeting. By that time, they had shared conversation and food on several occasions, Tokitsune had agreed to provide Ieyasu with copies of *Shūgaishō* and *Myōmokushō* (Kamakura- and Muromachi-era works on court antiquities, ceremonial practices, and so on), and Ieyasu had promised to provide Tokitsune a monthly stipend of rice. The term Tokitsune used for stipend in recording this in his diary was *fuchi* 扶持, the same one warriors used to describe a payment given as substitute for enfeoffed land.<sup>18</sup> No doubt Tokugawa Ieyasu himself had spoken in terms of *fuchi*, even though the bond formed between the two of them was not feudal in nature.

In the years that followed, Tokitsune filled his duties of clientage by serving as a source of information about court protocol and classical literature, introducing Ieyasu to important associates at court, and, as the head of the bureau in charge of making and regulating ceremonial court clothing, acting as personal tailor and clothier to the Tokugawa lord. For his part, Ieyasu provided not only a monthly stipend, but also the backing Tokitsune needed to be readmitted to court.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Tokitsune was consistent in using the term, beginning on 3/9/1591 when Ieyasu first promised him the stipend; see Yamashina Tokitsune, *Tokitsunekyō-ki*, in *Dai Nihon koki-roku* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1959-91), vol. 4, p. 197.

<sup>19</sup> Less than two years after forming patronage ties with Ieyasu, Yamashina Tokitsune entered into a similar relationship with Toyotomi Hidetsugu, nephew of Hideyoshi, and chancellor from 1591-95. Like Ieyasu, Hidetsugu provided Tokitsune a monthly stipend, and the courtier

<sup>16</sup> “The Historical Development of Political Clientelism,” in Kettering, pp. 419-421.

<sup>17</sup> See Butler, pp. 121-122 for the general outlines of the relationship.

Another form of political patronage, this with broader social and economic implications than the *kerai* system, was the *kugonin* system.<sup>20</sup> *Kugonin* were imperial purveyors who enjoyed a patronage relationship with the emperor (or others of the imperial household). They were, at least nominally, direct clients of the emperor, though none of course ever met him or had direct dealings with him (or her). Nonetheless, the economic patronage they received from, and gave to, the imperial household was real. The origins of the *kugonin* are hazy, but they begin to appear in documents in the late Heian era. As imperial purveyors, the *kugonin* generally resided on public land and, as the term implies, they produced and provided food (*kugo*) for the emperor. In reality, not all *kugonin* produced food items, so the offerings they made to the emperor varied, ranging from food to specialty goods to currency. Among the *kugonin* were those who dealt with the following products: raw fish, chickens, fruit, steel (pots, kettles, spades, hoes), charcoal, pine torches, and to a lesser degree, sake and rice.<sup>21</sup>

served, most conspicuously, as the warrior's literary advisor. Hidetsugu treated Tokitsune with particular largesse, frequently providing him an ox-drawn cart for travel to or from their meetings. When Hidetsugu was forced by Hideyoshi to commit suicide in 1595, Tokitsune expressed profound dismay in his diary. The two men had clearly enjoyed a relationship that was warm, in addition to being politically and socially beneficial to each.

<sup>20</sup> *Kugonin* have been examined both in relation to medieval economic development (by scholars such as Toyoda Takeshi, [*Zōtei*] Chusei *Nihon shōgyōshi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1952) and Wakita Haruko, *Nihon chūsei shōgyō hattatsushi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Ochanomizu Shobō, 1969) and as part of a significant social phenomenon (in particular by Amino Yoshihiko, *Nihon chūsei no hinōgyōnin to tennō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1984). See the very useful description and overview of *kugonin* in *Kokushi daijiten*, vol. 4, p. 741.

<sup>21</sup> Okuno Takahiro, *Sengoku jidai no kyūtei seikatsu* (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 2004), pp. 86-90, 117-118; Ōyama Kyōhei,

*Kugonin* are best understood as commercial dealers who, like other artisans and merchants in the medieval era, sought to protect themselves by forming guilds (*za*) and acquiring the protection of powerful patrons.<sup>22</sup> Their position was disencumbering yet precarious, for they were not farmers or warriors, nor were they priests or land holders. They dealt in physical "things" and were unattached to, and uncircumscribed by, the medieval village (and to a degree the *shōen*).<sup>23</sup> The benefits *kugonin* gained as clients of the emperor were several. First, in exchange for their offerings, they were exempted from taxes they would normally have paid (a simple substitution). Second, they were granted a monopoly on the sale of their goods — usually in the capital. Third, their economic activities were backed by the court, a useful connection when disputes arose. During the early medieval era, the *kugonin*'s economic importance to the court was slight—the reason being that imperial income-producing land remained relatively plentiful — but by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the goods and currency provided by *kugonin*, though small in absolute terms, had become a meaningful component of imperial income. It was the *kugonin*, however, who gained the most from this patronage arrangement, for the court's backing and protection allowed them to survive the strife and turmoil of Sengoku. With its control of the capital's toll gates and its authority to regulate (with warrior support) the city's commerce, the court's influence upon economics in Kyoto was not insignificant. The *kugonin*, as the emperor's clients, benefited significantly from the arrangement.

As outlined above, the patron-client relationship between emperor and *kugonin* seems to have greatly profited the *kugonin* while offering only limited benefits to emperor and court. But the situation was not that simple. On the one hand, like any patron, the emperor realized political advantages by having clients, individuals who

"Kugonin, jinin, yoriudo," in Asao Naohiro et al., eds., *Nihon no shakaishi*, in *Shakaiteki shoshūdan*, vol. 6, pp. 250-279.

<sup>22</sup> Okuno, pp. 117-118; Ōyama, p. 251.

<sup>23</sup> Ōyama, p. 250.

recognized his authority and offered him loyalty. Ties of this sort, which linked not just *kugonin* but also priests and warriors to the imperial court, were a critical resource for the court as it struggled to survive the upheaval of Sengoku. Without them, the court may have met its demise during the sixteenth century. With them, the court continued to enjoy remarkable support. On the other hand, there is evidence that the court had been the primary impetus behind the establishment and maintenance of *kugonin* as clients, suggesting that the imperial household had expectations of profiting through its acts of patronage. In a seminal article on the subject, Ōyama Kyōhei argues that the *kugonin* system was developed in the late Heian era in response to crises facing the imperial court at the time.<sup>24</sup> With military families on the rise and powerful temples (in collaboration with “evil priests” *akusō* 悪僧 and “shrine associates” *jinin* 神人) encroaching on public and private lands, the imperial state system was being undermined in fundamental ways. Having emerged victorious in the Hōgen affair of 1156, Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa took steps to shore up the system. In an edict of seven articles he laid out policy that restricted the development of new *shōen* by temples, shrines, and noble houses, prohibited ill behavior on *shōen*, attempted to limit the activities of *akusō* and *jinin*, and ordered temples and shrines to contribute land and labor for the good of the state. In other words, Go-Shirakawa took steps to control the religious organizations and those to whom they offered patronage, known by the generic title of “shrine associates.” A corollary to these restrictions was the court’s effort to acquire its own clients, *kugonin*, among the rudimentary commercial class. Edicts and documents from the centuries that follow reveal competition between the court, temples, and warriors for commercial clients who could bolster their positions as overlords and political authorities. Patronage, it appears, was a fundamental thread in the fabric of medieval Japanese society. Though the political structures of the early modern era would take different forms, I strongly suspect that new threads of political patronage, like those that de-

veloped between Tokugawa Ieyasu and the courtiers Hino Terusuke and Yamashina Tokitsune, soon came to replace the previous ones.

Although the basic concept of patronage — a system of reciprocal favors by two parties of unequal status or means and beneficial to both — is simple and straightforward, the meanings and manifestations of it are usually complex. One can thus examine artistic patronage, for example, to understand any number of issues: the influences upon a piece of art, the ambitions of artists or patrons, the economic livelihood of artists, the political or social meanings of art, and so on. The papers presented here provide a good example of this diversity of approach. Though they deal broadly with cultural patronage of the Tokugawa period, and more specifically with physical goods or art produced as a result of patronage, what each paper attempts to shed light on varies considerably.

In her piece on Shinshōji, Patricia Graham examines commoners’ patronage of the Buddhist temple known widely as Naritasan. In doing so she shows that patrons of Buddhism no longer came solely from the elite classes, and that the extensive donations of common people funded the construction of some of the finest temple architecture of the era. Graham’s interests thus are ultimately in both the financial sources and the artistic results of patronage. Morgan Pitelka’s approach is very different. He looks at the world of tea masters and potters and concludes that patronage in those circles could be extremely complex indeed. For example, he sees patronage in the practices whereby Sen tea masters and Raku potters legitimated each other’s work and the history of their families. He also finds artistic innovation and independence in these practices, things not usually associated with the workings of patronage. In the third paper I focus on the role of patronage in the building arts over the course of the Tokugawa era. One issue that I address that is absent from the other papers is the effects of declining patronage on the artisans involved. Like Graham and Pitelka, I too am interested in the artistic products of patronage, but I diverge from them in considering the effects of lost and changing patronage. In examining the patronage of Buddhist temples by Tokugawa-era daimyo, Alexander Vesey takes yet a different

<sup>24</sup> See note 20, above.

approach to the topic. More so than any of the rest of us, Vesey focuses on the way that individuals (in this case powerful warriors) attempted to bolster their positions through acts of largesse. Their clients were Buddhist temples, which of course were well situated to offer religious confirmation of the daimyo house, a primary object of warrior patronage. The last paper is Frank Chance's on the relationship of Matsudaira Sadanobu and Tani Bunchō. On the surface this is a straightforward examination of artistic patronage involving a powerful political figure and a highly regarded painter. Yet as Chance shows, Bunchō's relationship to Sadanobu can also be interpreted as that of lord and vassal, raising questions about the patronage relationship between the two men and the artistic pieces that resulted. In sum, though our papers begin with the premise of cultural patronage, they end up in quite different places, raising issues that we hope will elicit increased interest in patronage among a wide range of scholars.